

REMARKS

By this Amendment the specification has been amended to include topic headings, and claims 1, 4, 5, 10-12, 14, 15 17-21 have been amended to better define the inventive process. Entry is requested.

In the outstanding Office Action the examiner has rejected claims 1-5, 9-11, 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Popper et al., and claims 5-8, 12-14 and 17-20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Popper et al. These rejections must be withdrawn.

Popper et al. disclose a method and apparatus for continuously endowing liquid with mechanical energy by osmosing it across an osmotic membrane due to a differential in pressures across the membrane. A selective membrane is positioned between a liquid and a solution having a higher osmotic potential than the liquid, such that the solution becomes pressurized by the influx of liquid across the membrane. The solution is used to accomplish work (drive a water wheel).

Unlike the process of Popper et al., the pressurized solution in the present invention is not used directly to drive a prime mover. Instead, the pressure of the pressurized solution is transferred to another liquid via a pressure exchange system (see step (b) of claim 1). In this way, the risk of the prime mover being damaged by dissolved solutes in the solution is mitigated.

The examiner's rejections based on Popper et al., should be withdrawn.

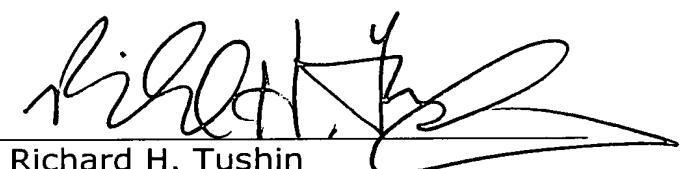
The examiner has rejected claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Loeb in view of Popper et al. The examiner states that, based on Popper et al., it would be obvious to use an osmosis cell with membranes in Loeb.

However, even if some sort of combination of Popper et al. with Loeb were obvious, a method would not be suggested that would include a step equivalent to step (b) of applicants' claim 1.

Favorable reevaluation of this application is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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